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Review of progress in the implementation of the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia

Fourth progress report

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides updates on the statement of mutual commitments and targets adopted in February 2013 by the Liberia country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Joint Steering Committee of the Peacebuilding Fund in Liberia. This is the fourth review report providing an assessment of progress in the implementation of the statement of mutual commitments. The report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014.

2. On 16 November 2010, the Government of Liberia and the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission adopted the statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Liberia (see PBC/4/LBR/2) to accompany Liberia's peacebuilding efforts. In the statement, it was agreed that periodic reviews of the statement targets would be carried out to monitor progress and amend the statement as needed.

3. The first review of the implementation of the statement of mutual commitments was conducted in 2011, the outcome document of which modified the original statement and created new commitments and targets (PBC/6/LBR/2). The document was adopted by the Liberia configuration on 9 May 2012. The second review focused on the main advancements and challenges that emerged between 1 August 2011 and 30 September 2012. The outcome of the second review was adopted on 20 March 2013. The third review covered the period from 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2013 and the review outcome was adopted on 20 March 2014.

4. The present report focuses on the status of implementation from 1 January to 31 December 2014 and draws upon the progress reports provided by the Government of Liberia, inputs of the members of the Liberia configuration, mission reports of the Chair of the Liberia configuration and results from discussions on the implementation of the statement of mutual commitments held in Monrovia in February 2014. In the light of the Ebola virus disease outbreak, there have been discussions around the need to revise the statement.

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II. Commitments by the Government of Liberia

A. Strengthening the rule of law

1. Prioritize the political will to facilitate the work of the Law Reform Commission to better enable it to realize its mandates

5. **Progress is made towards the results/outputs included in the strategy of the Law Reform Commission.** Following the launch of its strategic plan in 2011, the Law Reform Commission embarked on the implementation of key activities. During 2014, it provided expert advice to various institutions in the executive, legislative and judicial branches, including on the drafting of several pieces of legislation and policies. During the year, the Commission conducted a comprehensive desk review and 12 stakeholder consultations in 11 counties: Margibi, Grand Bassa, River Gee, Grand Gedeh, Nimba, Bong, Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Gbarpolu and Montserrado. These consultations brought together over 1,500 people from civil society organizations, women's groups and youth groups, as well as political, traditional and religious leaders. A draft national law reform policy was subsequently developed and reviewed by a technical working group comprising professional lawyers, policy analysts and legal experts.

6. **Budgetary allowance for the Law Reform Commission is increased.** Since its establishment in 2011, the Law Reform Commission has not benefited from any increment in its recurrent budgetary allotment to recruit sufficient professional staff. Increased budgetary support is urgently needed to ensure the timely delivery of its mandate.

7. **A national law reform policy is adopted.** The draft policy was developed in August 2014, after the Law Reform Commission and the Governance Commission co-hosted a stakeholders' dialogue with the support of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Governance Commission drafted a policy directive on enhancing the coordination and quality of the law-making process. Recommendations made by the key stakeholders formed a key input into the draft policy, which was overwhelmingly endorsed at the two validation sessions, held on 13 and 17 April 2015.

8. **A national judicial conference is held.** The judiciary and the Ministry of Justice convened a criminal justice conference from 26 to 28 March 2013. The conference resolutions were validated in October 2013 and a number of them were implemented in 2014.

2. Ensure adequate budgetary allocations for the justice sector

9. **Adequate budgetary allocations are made for the justice and security sectors in line with the UNMIL and World Bank justice and security expenditure review.** Since the publication of the expenditure review in January 2013, the Government of Liberia has been unable to meet the recommended budgetary allocation for the justice and security sectors. In the light of the imminent transition of UNMIL and the turning over of full security operations to Liberia in June 2016, it is important that the budgetary allocation be increased in line with the needs identified for these sectors.

3. Take immediate steps to reduce the unacceptable levels of pretrial detention cases

10. **Decrease in pretrial detention statistics.** The pretrial detention rate at the national level decreased from 87 per cent in February 2009 to 74 per cent in January 2014 and 64 per cent in December 2014. Detainees at the Monrovia Central Prison in Montserrado County constitute approximately half of the country's prison population. The most significant change in the overall figures was recorded in October 2014 as a result of specific emergency actions taken by the judiciary and the Minister of Justice in view of the Ebola crisis. A pretrial detention project implementation team was established and approved, as part of the new structure of the Justice and Security Joint Programme, to work specifically on pretrial detention issues.

11. **The magistrates' sitting court programme is expanded to all magistrates' courts in Montserrado County, as well as the three capital cities in Bong, Nimba and Lofa Counties.** The magistrates' sitting court programme, currently operating out of 10 magisterial courts in Montserrado County, reviewed 801 cases, resulting in 475 releases in 2014. A project on monitoring processes and proceedings in selected magisterial courts across Liberia was undertaken in 2014 to identify the reasons for the delays that lead to prolonged pretrial detention. The findings were discussed with national criminal justice actors, including the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Justice, and follow-up actions were taken by the Pretrial Detention Task Force. One of the initiatives was the establishment of a central case processing unit to effectively manage the progression of case files from magisterial to circuit courts. Jail delivery, which is a version of the magistrates' sitting court programme in other counties, has had a positive impact on the overall pretrial detention rate. Furthermore, enhanced collaboration between public defenders and county attorneys resulted in the review of 146 pretrial detention cases in Montserrado County and the subsequent release of the detainees from custody.

12. Issues regarding insufficient resource allocation and lack of capacity, in particular on prison security and management, need to be further addressed.

13. **Increase in the number of justice officials trained.** In 2014, the Office of the Solicitor General conducted three workshops, training almost 200 county attorneys and State prosecutors. In addition, 18 law school graduates received intensive training to become city solicitors. Five public defenders and nine prosecutors were also trained and deployed in May 2014 to the five counties covered by the Harper and Zwedru regional hubs. In July, the Judicial Institute trained 200 magistrates on the expanded jurisdiction of the magistrates' court. Training focused on, inter alia, sentencing, the conduct of trials and the classification of offences under the new sentencing act. In 2014, 16 new judges were appointed by the President and given training.

14. **The number of cases being addressed by the pilot probation system increases.** The probation service operates in Montserrado, Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties. In Bong County, the service operates out of the Gbarnga hub. In 2014, a total of 122 probationers in Montserrado County and 48 in Nimba County benefited from the probation service. Additional activities were stalled owing to the Ebola outbreak.

4. Strengthen human resource management to ensure that justice sector staff with appropriate training and an accurate understanding of the law are deployed in the counties, while keeping pace with the deployment of the Liberia National Police

15. **Newly graduated associate magistrates are deployed.** There was no new deployment in 2014, this target having been met in 2013. Initial reports indicate a gradual improvement in the quality of court hearings.

16. **Increase in recruitment and deployment of State prosecutors and public defenders to the hub regions.** To further strengthen criminal justice institutions, an additional five public defenders and nine county attorneys were trained and deployed in May 2014 to the counties covered by the Zwedru and Harper regional hubs, namely, Maryland, Grand Kru, River Gee, Grand Gedeh and Sinoe Counties. With the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, by December 2014, the total number of county attorneys had increased from 15 in 2012 to 24. This includes five additional prosecutors in Montserrado County. By December 2014, there were 84 city solicitors across the country, including the 18 law school graduates who had received intensive training. In practice, however, there are an estimated 112 city solicitors, including a number of volunteers. Each county now has a prosecutorial team at the circuit court level.

17. **The assignment of judges is reflective of the number of cases on the docket.** All counties now have assigned judges. However, there is a considerable need for more judges to effectively handle all the cases brought before the courts. Of the existing 152 magistrates' courts throughout the 16 circuits, only 90 stipendiary positions have been filled, with a gap of 62. Out of 304 associate magistrates' positions, only 213 have been filled, with a gap of 91.

18. **Legal services are operating from the Gbarnga hub and extended to other hubs.** The Gbarnga Ninth Judicial Circuit Court was officially opened in April 2014. The three magisterial courts in the Ninth Judicial Circuit in Bong now operate simultaneously, thereby increasing the number of cases being processed in a shorter time frame. In 2014, a total of 12 sexual and gender-based violence cases were adjudicated in the three counties covered by the hub, compared with 14 in 2013.

5. Create space for public dialogue on rule of law issues

19. **Policy on the informal and formal justice sectors is developed by the national conference committee.** The fourth national judicial conference was postponed owing to the Ebola outbreak. The judiciary is prioritizing the hosting of the conference in 2015.

20. **Recommendations of the 2010 national conference on the informal and formal justice system are implemented.** The recommendations have not yet been implemented owing to the postponement of the fourth national conference and the fact that many recommendations will need to be rearticulated as policy statements. The judiciary intends to plan a conference in 2015.

21. **Regional consultative dialogues are conducted to take the report of the 2010 national conference back to the people.** Consultations are yet to be conducted, owing to the limited funds available. The recommendations from the 2010 conference are expected to be discussed and validated at the next national judicial conference, after which regional consultations will be conducted.

6. Create and implement a case management and tracking system while simultaneously fostering professional relationships among all components of the justice system, including the Liberia National Police

22. **Record-keeping and case management pilots are established in the Gbarnga hub and extended to the Harper and Zwedru hubs in line with their construction and operationalization.** The first version of the pilot automated records case management system was developed and a simulation exercise of the software was carried out. End users were trained in basic computer literacy skills and the first testing with end users was carried out in October 2013. Owing to the Ebola outbreak, however, further progress was stalled in 2014.

23. Under a court clerks training programme implemented by the James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute and the Access to Justice and Security Section of UNMIL, 164 clerks in five regions of the country were trained in 2014 as part of the roll-out of the manual record-keeping system. Since 2011, 480 clerks have been trained.

7. Establish effective oversight mechanisms for the justice system that provide guarantees for judicial independence and public accountability

24. **The Public Service Office is functioning effectively at the Gbarnga hub and is established in other hubs in line with their construction and operationalization.** The Public Service Office acts as a referral service centre within the Gbarnga regional hub, providing the public with information on available services. Complaints can be lodged by residents of the hub area against justice and security actors, which are then referred to the appropriate sector for action. In 2014, a total of 15 complaints were received and referred to the respective criminal justice institutions.

25. The Public Service Office facilitated efforts to strengthen public confidence in the justice and security sectors. The data collected by civil society organizations and human rights monitors working with the Office are used for an early warning system. This contributes to a checks-and-balances mechanism to ensure that justice and security sector actors are acting ethically.

26. Two coordinators and three outreach officers for hubs two and three in Harper and Zwedru were recruited, trained and deployed to the south-eastern counties in June 2014. A public outreach campaign was conducted the same month. During the Ebola outbreak, outreach officers worked together with the various county health-care teams to provide awareness on Ebola while also informing citizens about the hub services.

27. **A review of accountability and oversight mechanisms is undertaken by justice and security sector institutions and recommendations are implemented.** Information on this item can be found in paragraph 61 below.

28. **An independent civilian oversight body for justice officials is established following consultations with the general public on its mandate.** In 2013, judges of the National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia endorsed the idea of expanding the membership of the Judicial Inquiry Commission to include the participation of civil society representatives and other experts. Their inclusion was reaffirmed in 2014 with the endorsement of eminent persons by members of the judiciary on the Board of the Inquiry Commission. The Judicial Inquiry Commission mechanism is reinforced by the public reporting mechanism; both

include the participation of civil society organizations in matters relating to unethical conduct of judicial actors.

29. **Review of court fees and fines is completed and necessary amendments are made to provisions and practices.** In 2014, the Supreme Court adopted a final amendment on court fees and fines submitted by the judiciary review committee concerned. In accordance with the law, the revised schedule of court fees and fines will be officially published in 2015 and posted at every court in Liberia.

30. **Review of the bail scheme is completed.** The bail scheme was discussed at the criminal justice conference held in March 2013 and a recommendation arising from the review of the implementation of the current system was proposed. Resolutions from the conference were validated on 24 October 2013. The bail scheme is expected to be implemented once government funding becomes available, hopefully in the financial year 2015/16.

31. **Meetings of the legislative committee on judicial affairs are convened regularly.** In 2014, the House of Representatives and Senate committees on the judiciary met regularly, almost every week, to discuss key judicial issues.

32. **Policy on a Liberian paralegal programme is developed by the Task Force on Non-Lawyers or other appropriate body.** The issue of paralegals was discussed at the criminal justice conference held in March 2013. Resolutions from this conference were validated on 24 October 2013. The judicial conference planning committee has considered "Pursuing new mechanisms for facilitating access to justice" as one of the themes of the fourth national judicial conference, to be held in 2015. Sub-themes would include (a) role and place of the paralegal; (b) use of alternative resolution within the context of the law; and (c) role of lawyers in strengthening the provision of pro-bono legal services.

B. Supporting security sector reform

1. Maintain the political will to adopt and implement the National Security Reform and Intelligence Act

33. **The National Security Council meets regularly.** In 2014, meetings were held on a regular basis.

34. **County security councils are functioning in Bong, Grand Kru, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Maryland, Nimba, River Gee and Sinoe Counties.** Only 3 (Grand Gedeh, Lofa and Nimba) of 15 councils meet monthly. This is largely due to a lack of financial support and coordination. In late 2014, all security councils were temporarily suspended because of the Ebola outbreak.

35. **The district security council is activated in the Gbarnga hub.** Pursuant to the National Security Reform and Intelligence Act, district security councils are to be established. To date, councils have been established only in six districts (three each) of two counties (Lofa and Nimba).

36. **Representation and active participation of women is realized at every level of security policymaking.** Gender mainstreaming in the security sector remains a high priority within the Government and gradual progress in this area has been observed. To date, female representation in the Liberia National Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the Drug Enforcement Agency stands at 18 per cent, 31 per cent and 30 per cent respectively.

37. The Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation has a target of 70 recruits for training per year for the coming three years. In 2014, 14 women were trained and the Government of Liberia, with United Nations support, launched a gender policy for the Bureau aimed at enhancing the participation of women and raising awareness of equality between uniformed and non-uniformed correctional personnel. To date, female representation in the Bureau stands at 15 per cent.

38. **The police law is prepared and submitted to the Legislature for enactment.** In 2014, the draft police law was submitted to the Governance Commission and other institutions for review. It is to be submitted to the Legislature in early 2015.

39. **Reform of the Drug Enforcement Agency, in line with the recommendations of the UNMIL/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) assessment, is initiated, including necessary amendments to the Drug Enforcement Agency Act.** The Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency vetted, recruited, trained and deployed additional personnel throughout the country in 2012-2013 to strengthen its capacity to combat drugs. Funding for the training of 102 new recruits was provided in the Government budget for the financial year 2014/15, with training beginning in the first quarter of 2015. The Agency has had 10 personnel deployed at Roberts International Airport in Monrovia since December 2013 and at all seaports since 2014. The Agency's strategic vision and plan will be initiated in 2015 in accordance with the UNMIL drawdown plan.

40. **The Anti-Drug Law is prepared.** In June 2014, the Legislature passed the Controlled Drug and Substances Act and the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency Act, which were signed by the President on 17 October 2014 and printed on handbills on 21 October.

41. **A national strategy on drugs is developed.** No action was taken in 2014 owing to the Ebola outbreak. Initial work to develop a national strategy on drugs began in 2013. Stakeholder discussions will resume in early 2015. Four components of the strategy are being considered: an adequate and efficient legal framework; an effective and efficient regime to reduce the demand for drugs; an effective regime to counter the supply of illicit drugs; and effective control and monitoring of licit drugs.

42. **The National Bureau for Investigation and the Ministry of National Security are dissolved.** The target was met in 2014.

43. **The public is engaged in dialogue on security sector reform.** In September 2013, a workshop on security sector reform was organized by the Governments of Liberia and Sweden in collaboration with the United Nations offices in Liberia. The workshop took stock of security sector reform issues in the light of the UNMIL drawdown and demonstrated the Government's commitment to justice and security in the country. The revision of the national security strategy commenced in 2014 with several public consultations but were halted in June 2014 owing to the outbreak of Ebola.

2. Ensure adequate budgetary allocations for the security sector

44. **Adequate budgetary allocations are made for the Armed Forces of Liberia, Liberia National Police, National Police Training Academy, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation,**

in line with the UNMIL and World Bank justice and security expenditure review. Referring to paragraph 9 above, the recommendations for increased budgetary allocation have not yet been met. Challenges remain, including lack of capacity, insufficient resource allocation and ownership and accountability in the Government with regard to the justice and security sectors.

3. Support the establishment and ongoing maintenance of five regional justice and security hubs

45. **Processing of land deeds for the hubs is completed.** The Land Commission completed the vetting, surveying and processing of the title deeds for hubs two to five. The deeds for hubs two and three were turned over to the Ministry of Justice, while those for hubs four and five are before the President for signature.

46. **Work to establish hubs two and three in Harper and Zwedru is commenced.** In 2014, the Justice and Security Board approved the renovation of a building in Harper which is to be used as the base for Police Support Unit officers and other justice and security services. The land deed for the Harper circuit court, in the city centre, was also processed in 2014. A concept plan for the proposed hub in Zwedru was drawn up by the Ministry of Public Works.

47. Based on the findings from a public perception survey and lessons learned from the Gbarnga hub, a phased approach is being applied for hubs two and three, with the first phase focusing on the provision of priority services within the region. According to a baseline survey on justice and security, conducted in 2013 by the Liberia Peacebuilding Office, most people in the five counties to be covered by the hubs in Zwedru and Harper were of the view that more efforts were needed to enhance confidence in the police and the court system. The deployment of five additional public defenders and nine county attorneys to the south-eastern counties was therefore prioritized in 2014. Among the other agreed priority services that do not require the construction of new infrastructure were the deployment of 10 human rights monitors, five public outreach officers and legal advisory services through civil society organizations. The recruitment of victim support and case liaison officers for the Sexual and Gender-based Violence Crimes Unit was initiated in 2014. In addition, in the 2014/15 fiscal budget, the Government of Liberia allocated $450,000 as operational funds for the Gbarnga justice and security regional hub and $500,000 as capital investment to contribute to the construction of the Zwedru regional hub.

48. **Public Service Offices are functioning in the hubs with protected means for citizens to file complaints.** Information in this regard can be found in paragraphs 26 to 28 above.

49. **Adequate number of staff are deployed to the hubs, with 20 per cent female representation achieved.** In 2014, the national police deployed 55 officers, including 15 women, to the Gbarnga hub, while the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization has 45 officers, including 20 women. Two of the four human rights monitors working in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties are women.

50. **Command and control plans for the Liberia National Police, Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation and Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization are implemented.** An assessment of the command and control system for the national police was included in an assessment conducted by the national police and UNMIL. The command and control centre is yet to be functional.

51. **Monitoring and evaluation are conducted to measure the effectiveness of the hubs.** In June 2014, the Liberia Peacebuilding Office at the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted a public perception survey on a broad range of justice and security matters in the three counties covered by the Gbarnga hub. A total of 1,500 interviews were conducted in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties, using a random stratified cluster sampling method to ensure that the findings were representative at the county level. Certain findings seem to suggest some relatively positive change. For example, 80 per cent of the interviewees indicated that they felt safe or very safe, compared with 65 per cent in a similar type of survey conducted in June 2012. Whereas 29 per cent of interviewees in June 2014 identified the police as the main provider of security in their community, many people, especially in rural areas, relied on community watch teams (30 per cent) and traditional authorities (26 per cent) for their security. On average, 28 per cent of interviewees in the three counties indicated that the security situation had improved compared with 2013, while 67 per cent indicated that it had remained the same and 5 per cent said that it had worsened. Another finding revealed that 45 per cent expressed trust in the court system, up from 37 per cent in June 2012, pointing to a slight improvement in perception, albeit still far below target. Some variation was observed between the counties, with people in Bong (57 per cent) expressing a higher level of trust in the courts compared with those in Lofa (32 per cent).

52. Whereas the establishment of the Gbarnga hub and the provision of the various services by the hub may have been a contributing factor to some of the positive changes in people's perception of justice and security issues, more research would be required to analyse the impact of other factors. With regard to the Police Support Unit operating from the hub, the 2014 survey revealed that 79 per cent of the interviewees who had seen the Unit address a serious security incident, such as mob violence or riots, in their community during the past 12 months were satisfied with how the incident was addressed and felt safer as a result. One of the recommendations from the survey is to further enhance confidence in the police, for example, through more community patrols, a swifter response time, transparent procedures and other confidence-building measures, taking into account the different perceptions of men and women. Overall, 12 per cent of interviewees confirmed that they had heard about the regional hub, varying from 21 per cent in Bong to 11 per cent in Lofa and 7 per cent in Nimba. In general, more men (16 per cent) than women (8 per cent) and 22 per cent of urban residents versus 9 per cent in rural areas had heard about the hub. Since targeted outreach started only in the course of 2013 and the three counties cover a vast area, the relatively low level of knowledge is not necessarily surprising, but it clearly emphasizes that more outreach needs to be conducted. The survey also recommended greater efforts by the Public Service Office and civil society organizations to raise awareness of how people can gain access to the justice system, including information on procedures and costs, and of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as for land disputes.

53. **Integrated communication networks for the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the Liberia National Police are established.** For the Gbarnga hub region, institutions were connected to the Internet, making communication within counties and with headquarters more effective. In 2014, there was some further improvement in communications and coordination by the national police, the Bureau of Immigration

and Naturalization and the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation. However, the next phase of the instalment of the procured communications equipment is awaiting the conclusion of negotiations on cost-sharing between the Government and the telecommunications provider. The Government has agreed in principle on the costs and consultations are being held to conclude the matter.

54. **Legislative and regulatory framework is amended to support decentralization within the justice and security sectors.** The process of amending the legislative and regulatory framework was initiated in 2013 and is expected to be concluded in 2015.

55. **Lessons learned in 2013 from the Gbarnga hub experience are taken on board in developing the hubs in Harper and Zwedru.** The proposals for hubs two and three largely changed the approach taken at the Gbarnga hub by focusing first and foremost on the provision of justice and security services to citizens. Lessons learned in 2013 from the Gbarnga hub project have been incorporated into the design of the implementation strategy for hubs two and three. A phased approach is being applied. In the first phase, the focus has been on service delivery rather than infrastructure. The Justice and Security Policy Board approved the renovation of the telecommunications building in Harper, which is to be used by justice and security institutions in the second phase. The third phase, depending on available funding, focuses on back-office support systems to improve the productivity and functionality of institutions with a presence at the hubs.

4. Advance the reform of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in line with its strategic plan while maintaining progress in reforming the Liberia National Police

56. **Training opportunities (including specialized training) for the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the Liberia National Police are increased.** Regular training was not conducted in 2014 for Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization officers owing to the Ebola outbreak. However, through the Government's 2014/15 fiscal budget, funding was provided for the training of 250 high school graduates as Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization officers. The training will begin in 2015.

57. In 2013, the national police recruited, vetted and trained 291 officers with support from the Justice and Security Trust Fund. In May 2014, the 291 recruits (245 men and 46 women) graduated from the National Police Training Academy after 12 months of basic training. In 2014, the police recruited and vetted 1,001 officers, including 229 women. Funding for the training of 315 high school graduates as new recruits of the Liberia National Police was provided in the Government's 2014/15 budget and training will begin in 2015. As at December 2014, the strength of the national police stood at 4,807 officers (845 women and 3,962 men). Several high-level training programmes were conducted in 2014, including for 78 Liberia National Police and 3 Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization officers, who were trained in public administration and finance with support from the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; 2 police officers, who were trained in strategic leadership, with support from the Government of Botswana; and 2 police officers, who were trained in counter-terrorism, sponsored by China.

58. The Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation trained 70 officers, including 17 women. The new recruits graduated in November 2014.

59. **Reform and restructuring of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization continues.** The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization plans to devolve major functions, including naturalization and other functions, to the county level in order to ensure a decentralized immigration service delivery process. The Bureau conducted a transparent and merit-based recruitment process resulting in the selection and deployment of 15 county commanders and 5 regional commanders. The 45 officers deployed to the Gbarnga hub lack adequate logistical support to perform their duties.

60. **Increase the quality and quantity of the Liberia National Police, in line with identified UNMIL transition planning gaps.** A total of 291 national police recruits, including 46 women, graduated from the National Police Training Academy in May 2014.

5. Advance efforts to establish effective civilian oversight mechanisms for national security institutions, in particular, empowering the National Security Council, the county security councils and relevant oversight bodies in the Legislature

61. **Recommendations of the UNMIL/Department of Peacekeeping Operations security sector oversight study are implemented.** With the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, the judiciary, the national police and the Office of the Solicitor General worked with UNMIL, UNDP and the International Security Sector Advisory Team to undertake a review of their management and accountability mechanisms in March and April 2013. The findings were shared with all justice and security actors. Recommendations from this study were validated by the judiciary and the Ministry of Justice on 24 October 2013. Owing to the Ebola outbreak in 2014, most recommendations are still to be implemented.

62. **Civilian Complaints Board is established and piloted.** The Board is foreseen under the police law, which is currently being reviewed by the Governance Commission.

63. **Community policing focal points are functioning effectively in Bong, Grand Kru, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Maryland, Nimba, River Gee and Sinoe Counties.** By December 2014, community policing programmes had been initiated in 13 out of the 15 counties in Liberia. Community police focal persons embarked on a campaign to engage local communities through women's groups and student leaders. They also make themselves available to local leaders to aid in security planning. The community police liaison of the national police is engaging with community leaders by educating them on the importance of their interest in community security.

64. **The national defence strategy is finalized.** The strategy was finalized and approved. It is focused on national defence imperatives and regional peace and security.

65. **Civilian oversight of the Liberia National Police, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation and Armed Forces of Liberia is strengthened.** A civilian oversight board has been proposed. Consultations between key stakeholders on the mandate and operationalization of the proposed board are ongoing. In addition, in 2014, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, with support from UNMIL and the United Nations police, prepared recommended amendments to the Aliens and Nationality Law as well as a draft Act establishing the Liberia Immigration Service.

6. Continue engagement in initiatives pursued by the Economic Community of West African States

66. **Engagement with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other countries in the subregion on the management of the Transnational Crime Unit is continued.** In 2013, a national task force against human trafficking was set up, led by the Ministry of Labour and including all security agencies as members. Through the task force, updates on the status of human trafficking were prepared and a national action plan on human trafficking was drafted. In 2014, the Transnational Crime Unit continued to make operational progress with mentoring, technical advice, training and programmatic support from UNMIL and UNODC. Efforts are ongoing to revitalize the Unit's Management Board and incorporate the Unit into the national security transition plan. By December 2014, the Unit had 24 staff members.

67. The Ministry of Justice prosecuted one human trafficking case and won a conviction in 2014.

68. **The Legislature is deliberating on the Fire Arms Control Act.** While the draft legislation was being prepared, it was agreed that owing to the complex subject matter, an international expert and a local expert would conduct an in-depth review of the draft. In November 2014, the President submitted the Bill to the Legislature and it is currently pending deliberation.

69. **The Small Arms Commission and the Liberia National Police are coordinating on a firearms registration and marking system.** With support from the European Union and ECOWAS, the Commission received two firearm marking machines from the Regional Centre on Small Arms based in Kenya. Training was conducted from 16 to 20 March 2015 in Monrovia by the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for the Armed Forces of Liberia, Liberia National Police, Executive Protection Service, National Security Agency and Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization to fully operationalize the machines. UNMIL supported the training.

C. Promoting national reconciliation

1. Maintain the political will to implement the strategic road map on national healing, peacebuilding and reconciliation

70. **The reconciliation road map is finalized, including an inclusive process of public consultation.** The road map has been developed through an extensive consultative process, which culminated in a three-day intensive design workshop and three single-day technical reviews of earlier drafts. Extensive review and validation were also conducted by the Joint Steering Committee, the Standing Committee on Peace, Religion and National Reconciliation, political parties, civil society organizations, university students and citizens at the grass-roots level. The road map was endorsed at the formal launch of the "Liberia Rising 2030" forum, held in Gbarnga, as one prong of a two-pronged approach to achieving the national vision, the other being the medium-term economic growth and development strategy (the Agenda for Transformation 2012-2017).

71. **The reconciliation road map is officially launched.** This target was met in June 2013.

72. **A joint reconciliation programme based on the reconciliation road map, and involving the Government, the United Nations, international partners and civil society, is developed.** A draft joint national reconciliation programme was developed. Based on lessons learned from the Justice and Security Joint Programme, however, it was agreed instead to focus on joint programming, ensuring that all partners involved coordinated their activities in the various thematic areas of the road map. The road map is aligned with the Agenda for Transformation 2012-2017 and the United Nations "One Programme 2013-2017".

73. **Implementation of the reconciliation road map, in line with the joint reconciliation programme, is initiated.** The implementation of the road map began with the formal launch of a national history project in May 2013. The project seeks to rewrite the history of Liberia to be as balanced and inclusive as possible and reflect all ethnic groups. The various projects approved by the Joint Steering Committee in October 2013 address 7 of the 12 specific areas of the road map. The projects made minimal gains owing to the Ebola outbreak.

74. **A coordinated structure and a funding mechanism (for example, a trust fund) are established in support of the implementation of the joint reconciliation programme.** While there will be no trust fund as such, a multi-stakeholder steering committee, co-chaired by the Government and the United Nations, oversees the implementation of the various programmes related to the road map.

2. Increase the holding of inclusive dialogue on national reconciliation, including on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and land issues

75. **Timely submission of government reports in accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act is achieved.** In July 2014, the President submitted a comprehensive report to the Legislature on progress made towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Liberia Peacebuilding Office prepared the report, which indicates that approximately 60 per cent of the 207 recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report have either been implemented or are on course. Other recommendations, some of which would require legislation, are expected to be taken forward by key stakeholders.

76. **A communications strategy for the reconciliation road map is developed with a view to creating space for public dialogue on national reconciliation.** A draft reconciliation communication strategy has been developed, but needs to be reviewed. The review is expected to be completed by May 2015.

77. **A communications strategy for the reconciliation road map is implemented, including quarterly reports to the public on progress made with respect to implementing the road map.** Once finalized, the implementation of the strategy is expected to start in 2015. The slow implementation of the road map remains a concern.

3. Generate the political will necessary for the Independent National Commission on Human Rights to fulfil its mandate

78. The mandate of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights in relation to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is clarified. In 2014, the role of the Independent National Commission on Human

Rights with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was further clarified. Through 11 stakeholder forums held in five counties across Liberia, the Commission clarified its mandate and core functions in terms of monitoring and investigating human rights complaints, abuses and violations. Key stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders, women and youth leaders, student groups and political leaders, agreed on the Commission's coordination role in developing a context-specific methodology for Palava Hut talks and operationalizing the process.

79. **Internal challenges facing the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, particularly low staff capacities and inadequate resources, are addressed.** The Independent National Commission on Human Rights is still facing a number of operational challenges and has limited capacity to fulfil its broad mandate. Owing to inadequate levels of government funding and other factors, the Commission has not been able to operate optimally over the past few years. The new Chair of the Commission is aware of these dynamics and is consulting and collaborating with national and international partners to ensure that the Commission can deliver on its core responsibilities. The Peacebuilding Fund is supporting the Commission in strengthening its capacity, in particular to design and implement the Palava Hut programme. In 2014, the Programme Management Unit became fully operational and staff was trained.

80. **Reparation, memorialization and Palava Hut programmes are implemented in line with the reconciliation road map.** The Palava Hut programme was formally launched by the President on 19 October 2013 in Zwedru. Following the launch, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights held a Palava Hut forum in Monrovia from 13 to 16 November 2013 to engage with key stakeholders on the scope and nature of the programme. The forum generated critical insights about the various practices of Palava Hut systems by the four principal linguistic groups in Liberia. Limited progress was made in 2014 owing to the Ebola outbreak.

81. **Capacity to address ongoing human rights violations and build a culture of respect for human rights is strengthened.** Since the Independent National Commission on Human Rights dispatched its first human rights monitors to Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties in 2012, they have made significant efforts to increase public awareness on citizens' rights and responsibilities. In 2014, a total of 10 human rights monitors were recruited, trained and deployed to the counties covered by hubs two and three. Reports from prosecutors, public defenders and human rights monitors indicate that citizens' awareness of their rights is gradually being enhanced in these counties. The monitors have also been working closely with key justice actors to address the high pretrial detention rate. In addition, they have educated prisoners about their fundamental rights, including the right to privacy, visitation, property and medical care and the right to practice their religion. Prisoners were also educated on how to access the courts and other justice systems. In 2014, the monitors, working together with public outreach officers, supported the various county health teams with Ebola outreach activities, ensuring that human rights messages as well as services provided by the hub were widely communicated in the counties.

4. Continue to address the role of youth in peacebuilding, primarily through the national youth service programme for peace and development

82. **National youth service programme for peace and development is implemented, including interventions targeting at-risk youth.** The six core counties for the national youth service programme are Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Maryland and Sinoe, with additional activities for youth centres and agriculture in Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Montserrado and Nimba Counties. Prior to the Ebola outbreak, the core programme was scaled up to eight counties, with the addition of Grand Cape Mount and Nimba, under complementary funds provided by the peacebuilding, education and advocacy programme supported by the Government of The Netherlands. Qualitative evidence from monitoring indicates that communities highly value the work done by the national volunteers, not only in enhancing social service delivery, but also by fostering public confidence in the institutions to which they are assigned. During the 2013/14 school year, the quality of teaching, the number of students enrolled and the percentage of teachers holding a university education all improved in the 52 schools where volunteers were working. School principals reported that they would have been unable to teach mathematics and science without the support of the volunteers. Other schools have been able to add eleventh grade instruction to their curriculum, which in turn has increased enrolment by 150 per cent in some schools. A total of 14 health-care institutions, suffering from understaffing, have also benefited significantly from the deployment of national volunteers. Interviews with heads of the various hospitals and health-care centres indicate that the volunteers significantly helped to improve service delivery, especially adolescent reproductive health care, since they tended to relate much better to patients within their peer age groups. Their deployment also improved the health worker to patient ratio. A total of 10 youth centres also benefited from the deployment of volunteers, who performed the role of finance secretaries in the youth centre management committees, thus improving the quality of management of the centres. They also facilitated youth development activities and helped in teaching leadership and conflict resolution skills among young people in the various counties. The 17 agricultural projects to which volunteers were deployed also contributed to youth participation in development. Interviews with agricultural extension workers indicate that the national volunteers were able to inspire young people to participate in agricultural projects. Following consultations with all stakeholders, in the second half of 2014 the volunteers provided key support for Ebola response interventions, including contact tracing, family tracing for separated children, psychosocial support and social mobilization.

5. Continue to address land issues through the Land Commission

83. **Alternative dispute resolution system is piloted in five counties.** Five land coordination centres, namely, Zorzor (Lofa County), Gbarnga (Bong County), Kakata (Margibi County), Ganta (Nimba County) and Harper (Maryland County) were operational in 2014. (A sixth centre was opened in Caldwell, Monserrado County in February 2015.)

84. The Land Commission, with support from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme through the Peacebuilding Fund, along with other partners involved in land dispute resolution, enabled the centres to identify, coordinate and strengthen local alternative dispute resolutions mechanisms for land disputes and to

make them more inclusive (including chiefs, women, young people and religious leaders). According to 2014 monitoring reports from the five land coordination centres, 95 per cent of government officials and 70 per cent of the general population in the 10 districts where the centres operate were aware of their land rights and prefer to use the centres for resolving land disputes. In 2014, a total of 256 land dispute cases were recorded and 34 resolved at the five centres. Out of the recorded cases, 64 were reported by women and 192 by men. The Ebola outbreak significantly affected the operational ability of the centres in 2014. Although this result is still below target, the growing number of land cases lodged at the centres signifies gradual progress in terms of people's confidence that alternative dispute resolution systems are indeed legitimate options for the adjudication of land disputes. According to recent data, 69 per cent of the resolved cases remain resolved one year after the disputants reached an agreement. Remaining challenges include the need to increase awareness-raising, enhance the capacity to handle cases in remote communities and sustain the work of the centres.

85. **Consultation and vetting for the land policy is completed.** The consultation and vetting process was completed in 2013.

86. **Legislative reforms to address issues of land tenure are made.** Subsequent to the drafting of the land rights policy by the policy task force in 2012, the Land Commission has been extensively involved in the planning and implementation of public consultations on the policy. The Land Rights Act was submitted to the Legislature in December 2014 for review. The statement of intent in respect of the national land alternative dispute resolution policy was completed in 2014 and the policy is currently being discussed with all stakeholders. A policy statement is expected by April 2015; the statement will serve as a foundation for the development of the overall national legal framework on a land alternative dispute resolution system to be upheld in the judicial system.

87. **Status of the Land Commission is clarified (current mandate expires in 2014).** The mandate of the Land Commission was extended to 31 January 2016. The draft Act to establish a new Liberian land authority was presented to the Cabinet in February 2015. Subsequent to Cabinet approval, the land authority is expected to be established before the end of 2015.

6. Advance efforts on decentralization and constitutional reform

88. **Implementation of the national policy on decentralization and local governance is initiated.** Given that the implementation of the decentralization policy requires constitutional amendments, the Constitution Review Committee listed decentralization as a thematic area for discussion under the framework for civic education and public consultation in the context of the constitutional review process. In February 2015, the President launched the deconcentration platform, which is aimed at shifting the delivery of a range of selected services from the capital to the counties. This is the first phase in the process of decentralization and will initially be implemented in seven counties, namely, Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Maryland and Nimba.

89. **The Constitution Review Committee reviews the 1986 Constitution and makes recommendations for amendment(s) in line with its terms of reference.** In 2014, the Constitution Review Committee conducted a range of public information activities and held a total of 73 consultations with citizens in all

electoral districts of the 15 counties as well as 10 thematic consultations with political parties, traditional leaders, women's groups, youth groups, civil society organizations and professional associations. Furthermore, consultations were held with Liberians in the diaspora, particularly in the United States of America and Ghana. A total of 16,048 Liberians were consulted and their suggestions consolidated into specific recommendations for Constitutional amendments. Owing to the Ebola outbreak, the national constitutional conference had to be postponed to March 2015.

III. Commitments by the Peacebuilding Commission

1. Mobilize resources for the peacebuilding priorities identified in the statement of mutual commitments and the Liberia peacebuilding programme, advocating that the pledges and commitments made by different donors be honoured and effectively coordinated; this will be carried out in coordination with and in support of Liberian initiatives

90. The Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission visited Liberia twice in 2014. In February, he was accompanied by the Deputy Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office. The delegation explored ways to enhance financial support, strengthen coordination and maximize synergies for peacebuilding purposes in collaboration with the United Nations, the international financial institutions, bilateral partners and the Government of Liberia. In July, discussions during his visit also focused on the needs and priorities of Liberia in view of the drawdown of UNMIL, in particular in the justice and security sectors, to prepare for the transition.

2. Broaden the donor base for Liberia and encourage the wide participation of partners in all international forums in which support can be garnered for Liberia; this will be carried out in coordination with Liberian authorities

91. Resource mobilization for peacebuilding purposes has been highlighted a number of times, including at the Liberia configuration meetings in New York and in meetings with a broad range of stakeholders in Monrovia. The Chair has continued to advocate for sustained international support for Liberia, especially in the light of the impact of the Ebola virus disease on the peacebuilding process in the country. An important part of the configuration's ongoing engagement and support for Liberia has also been implemented through bilateral efforts.

92. Government plans and programmes for reconciliation, justice and security need to be followed through, in particular in the light of the Ebola recovery and the drawdown of UNMIL. Efforts to enhance the effectiveness of existing programmes and funding mechanisms were aimed at marshalling resources for peacebuilding and contributing to the efforts of the Government of Liberia to ensure adequate and predictable resources.

93. While most bilateral contributions in 2014 focused on the fight against the Ebola virus disease, a few of the contributions that should be noted include the $1.5 million for the Justice and Security Trust Fund provided by Sweden under the Justice and Security Joint Programme and the $450,000 that will be provided until December 2015 through the global focal point for police, justice and corrections areas in the rule of law in post-conflict and other crisis situations.

3. Generate sustained attention and take measures to advocate within the international community for support to the peacebuilding process by highlighting progress, challenges, risks and opportunities relating to peacebuilding efforts in the country

94. The Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission met four times in 2014 at the configuration and expert levels. The Chair met with bilateral partners and Liberian officials in Monrovia, New York and other cities to discuss developments in the areas under the three pillars of the statement of mutual commitments. He also organized events for the Liberia configuration with the Minister of Defence of Liberia and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Liberia/Head of UNMIL during their visits to New York. The Liberia configuration also co-chaired joint configuration meetings with the Guinea and Sierra Leone configurations in August and November 2014 to discuss the immediate and long-term impacts of the Ebola crisis on peacebuilding efforts and to prepare for enhanced peacebuilding support in the immediate aftermath of the crisis.

4. Work with regional actors, particularly ECOWAS, to build upon their interventions in building durable peace in Liberia and in the subregion

95. The Chair continued engaging with ECOWAS on his visit to Liberia in February 2014. Following the peak of the Ebola virus disease outbreak in Liberia in July 2014, the Chair engaged with the Mano River Union, in particular at the joint meeting of the Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone configurations in August 2014.

5. Advise the Government of Liberia and the Liberian people on lessons learned, particularly with respect to land tenure and rights, the harmonization of traditional and statutory legal systems and reconciliation from experiences gained in similar situations, serving as an objective voice and wielding, as merited, political leverage to keep related processes on track

96. The Chair continued to hold discussions on land-related issues, natural resources and community involvement as part of his follow-up to the letter from the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia of 12 December 2013. He also visited a land coordination centre in Liberia to see the progress made in alternative land dispute mechanisms. The Chair continued to emphasize, to senior Government officials, the importance of land and natural resource management for the country's sustainability, taking into account the concerns and needs of local communities.

6. Contribute to deliberations on Liberia, in particular in the Security Council, by providing advice on the three peacebuilding priorities in order to ensure a responsible transition on security management from UNMIL to the Government of Liberia

97. The Chair addressed the Security Council three times in 2014. One of his statements focused on the findings from his visits to Liberia, including the challenges of accelerating progress on justice and security as well as national reconciliation efforts, gender issues, conflict-sensitive management of land and resources and the importance of the role of civil society. In the September and November meetings of the Council, the Chair gave a briefing on the outcome of the joint meeting of the Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia configurations, which focused on the impact of the Ebola crisis and its implications for peacebuilding.

7. Contribute, individually and collectively, to supporting Liberia in its peacebuilding efforts by collaborating closely with UNMIL and the United Nations country team and encouraging effective coordination among the United Nations, international organizations and donors at the country, Headquarters and capital levels

98. Through close consultation with senior officials of UNMIL and other United Nations entities, the Chair continued to ensure stronger coordination of support among stakeholders at the international and national levels for the implementation of the statement of mutual commitments. Through his visits to Liberia and his addresses to the Liberia configuration and the Security Council, he maintained collective support and aligned messages within the international community. He also maintained close contact with the donor community to mobilize support for Liberia and participated in discussions and forums in New York and in other cities to advocate support for peacebuilding in Liberia.

8. Monitor the preparation and implementation of the Liberia peacebuilding programme with a view to ensuring that the peacebuilding priorities outlined in the statement of mutual commitments are addressed effectively

99. Findings and recommendations from the Chair's visits to Liberia are contained in his reports and have been shared with the Liberia configuration. While the configuration continued to call for further progress in national reconciliation efforts (including strengthening the role of women), land and natural resource management, and justice and security reform, the impact of the Ebola virus disease delayed the implementation of a number of areas in the peacebuilding priorities outlined in the statement of mutual commitments. Priorities will need to be reviewed and aligned to post-Ebola recovery strategies and plans.

IV. Review

100. In the light of the impact of the Ebola virus disease on Liberia's peacebuilding process in 2014, it is proposed that the way forward for the statement of mutual commitments be reviewed to develop a new mechanism in 2015, taking into account the need to streamline the various national strategies and policies (namely, the Agenda for Transformation and the national reconciliation road map) implemented in the post-Ebola recovery phase as well as the drawdown of UNMIL.